

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets makes changes to Figs. 1 and 5 and replaces the original sheets with Figs. 1 and 5.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 7, 9, 10 and 12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 7 is amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiners Bodawala and Gupta at the interview held January 31, 2007, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

I. Formal Matters

The Office Action objects to the drawings because they include reference numerals that are not mentioned in the description. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that reference numeral 6 is missing for Fig. 4, reference numerals 12, 14, 15, 16 and 18 are missing for Fig. 6, and reference numerals 30 and 32 are missing for Figs. 7(a) and 7(b). The specification, at page 4, line 11, is amended with a paragraph containing the explanations of numerals to 12, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 30. Support for such an amendment is found, at least, for example, at page 19 of the attached certified copy of the English-language translation of JP 2002-91034. Numeral 32 is introduced into the specification to recite outer wall, as discussed at the interview.

The specification is amended at page 5, line 21 to include the phrase "of the honeycomb structure 30" after the phrase "outer wall," and at page 5, line 24 to include reference numeral 32 after the phrase "outer wall," as supported in the original translated specification, and as discussed at the interview.

The Office Action objects to the phrase "the slit" because the phrase is involved with multiple reference numerals such as reference numeral 9 on page 5, line 6, and reference

numeral 2 on page 1, line 20. The specification at page 5, line 6, is amended to replace reference numeral 9 with reference numeral 2 so as to obviate this objection.

Additionally, Fig. 1 is amended to clarify the relationship between radius "r" and elements 3 and 12; and Fig. 7(b) is amended to recite "Related Art."

II. Claim Rejections

The Office Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, asserting that the phrase "each hold" is unclear. Claim 7 is amended to recite "each hole" instead of the phrase "each hold," to obviate this rejection.

The Office Action further rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Yamamoto (U.S. Patent No. 4,373,895); rejects claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of Masaki (JP 2000-326318); and rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of Suzuki (U.S. Patent No. 6,193,497). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Yamamoto, Masaaki and Suzuki, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a die for forming a honeycomb body, where curved portions are formed at the four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and the radius of curvature of the curved portion is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7.

Yamamoto, in Fig. 1, merely discloses a method for producing an extrusion die for making a honeycomb structure with axially extending separate passages. Yamamoto further discloses the dimensions for feed passages, pulling slots and extrusion slots. However Yamamoto makes no reference to any curved portions that are formed at the four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and the radius of curvature over the curved portion being 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7.

Masaaki, in paragraph 34, merely discloses a thickness of the junction medium within the honeycomb molding die to be less than 0.005 mm. In paragraphs 36 and 38, Masaaki

further discloses a metal alloy composition of the actual die and its corresponding resistance to a variety of environmental conditions. However, Masaaki fails to disclose a die for forming a honeycomb body wherein curved portions are formed at the four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and the radius of curvature of the curved portions is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7.

Suzuki, in col. 4, line 43, discloses the thickness of a die to be 15 mm and the length of the die to be 215 mm. Suzuki makes no reference to any curved portions of the corners of the die. Moreover, Suzuki fails to disclose the die forming a honeycomb body, where curved portions are formed at the four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and the radius of curvature of the curved portions is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Yamamoto, Masaaki and Suzuki, individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a die for forming a honeycomb body wherein curved portions are formed at the four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and the radius of curvature is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7.

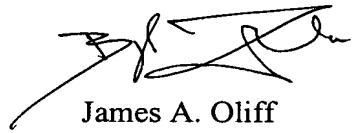
In accordance with the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 7 defines patentable subject matter. Claims 9, 10 and 12 depend from claim 7, and therefore, also define patentable subject matter, as well as for the additional features they recite. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 7, 9, 10 and 12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:BAZ/hs

Attachment:

Replacement Drawing Sheets (Figs. 1 & 5)
Certified Copy of the English-Language Translation of JP 2002-91034

Date: February 16, 2007

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